

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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ARMS BUILD-UP IN CUBA

In a note addressed to the Secretary General of the Organization of American States on October 28 (Department of State Press Release No. 622), the United States Representative to the Council of the Organization of American States stated that the Cuban Government has been receiving substantial quantities of arms from various sources. In response to numerous queries as to the nature of this arms build-up, the Department is making public information on this subject which has been compiled from a number of sources which are considered to be reliable.

Since Fidel Castro came into power, Cuba has created and armed a military force ten times the size of that of ex-President Fulgencio Batista and far larger than any army in Latin America.

Added to the arms already held by the 26th of July Movement (approximately 8,000 men) upon Castro's assumption of power, the regime took over materiel sufficient for an army of 20,000 men. These supplies provided a formidable arsenal for the Castro Government at its outset. In addition, the Castro regime accepted delivery of considerable ammunition contracted for by the Batista Government and also sent special missions to Europe for the purpose of purchasing even more war materiel.

Cuban arms purchases include not only sufficient small arms, according to Fidel Castro's own announcement, to equip Cuba's militia, whose numbers now total more than 200,000 persons, with late model weapons but also large quantities of heavy equipment of a variety of types.

The tempo of arms deliveries to Cuba has stepped up noticeably since the Seventh Meeting of Foreign Ministers in August of this year and Castro's subsequent rejection of the San Jose Resolution, which condemned extracontinental intervention in the affairs of the hemisphere and the acceptance by an American republic of an extracontinental offer of intervention. Significantly, recent arms shipments to Cuba have originated exclusively in Iron Curtain countries. Spokesmen of the Cuban Government have clearly indicated its intention to continue to depend upon the Sino-Soviet Bloc nations, principally the U.S.S.R. and Czechoslovakia, to build their war materiel stocks. The Bloc nations apparently desire to contribute to Caribbean tensions by burdening the Cuban economy with excessive arms purchases and by supporting the aggressive policies of the Cuban Prime Minister.

At least

At least 12 Soviet ships have delivered arms and ammunition to Cuba since July of this year, the most recent being the PSCM which unloaded approximately 6,000 tons of arms at the port of Freston, Cuba on November 7, 1960. Total Soviet Bloc arms provided to the Castro Government amount to at least 28,000 tons.

Attached is a tabulation of arms and ammunition estimated to have been imported into Cuba since Castro assumed power on January 1, 1959.

ESTIMATE

ESTIMATE OF ITEMS INCLUDED IN MILITARY IMPORTS BY
CASTRO GOVERNMENT

	<u>Soviet Bloc</u>	<u>Other</u>	
	<u>Sources</u>	<u>Sources</u>	<u>Total</u>
Automatic Rifles:			
Czech	45,000		
Other types		40,000	
Total			93,000
Submachine guns	10,000	1,000	11,000
Machine guns (including .50 cal.)		200	200
Flame throwers		7	7
Mortars	150	104	254
Tanks	40	15	55
Assault guns	10		10
Armored Personnel Carriers	60		60
Field guns	25		25
Howitzers	55	16	71
Rocket launchers	30	70	100
Anti-tank guns	60		60
Anti-aircraft guns	80		80
Helicopters, Soviet	10		10
Mobile Radar, Soviet model	15		15
MIG Aircraft	8		8
Ammunition (rounds):			
Assorted ammunition	12,000,000 lbs.		12,000,000 lbs.
Rifle		44,734,000	44,734,000
Machine guns		1,000,000	1,000,000
Hand Grenades		20,000	20,000
Artillery Shells		43,735	43,735
Rockets 3.5 inch		(plus 835 boxes) 8,000	(plus 835 boxes) 8,000

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